

STATEMENT OF MASTER SARGEANT DANIEL FORNEY  
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U. S. HUMAN RESOURCES COMMAND  
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM  
U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
“WOUNDED ARMY GUARD AND RESERVE FORCES: INCREASING THE  
CAPACITY TO CARE”

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, it is a distinct honor to be here to discuss Active Duty Medical Extension, the Medical Retention Program, and life in medical hold at Walter Reed for injured Guard and Reserve soldiers.

I am Master Sergeant Forney, an Army Reservist from Pennsylvania, with almost 25 years of proud service.

I arrived at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in July of 2002, after I volunteered and received orders from Chief Warrant Officer Shuttleworth of Human Resources Command. Chief Shuttleworth saw the need for some one to help with administrative processes for USAR/NG Soldiers because the Active Duty Medical Hold Company did not know how to help these soldiers. I was the first reservist liaison to be sent to Walter Reed to help soldiers, and was the only one there in that capacity for over one year. When I first arrived there was only about 10 injured Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers on the ground at Walter Reed. I assessed the situation and determined that the process was broken. Soldiers fell off orders had delayed pay and lost Medical care. The soldiers' families also lost tricare benefits.

After a short time at Walter Reed I was given three 3-ring binders with over 800 sets of orders. These were orders for injured and ill soldiers from all over the North Atlantic Regional Medical Command. After contacting 98% of the Soldiers I was able to drop the number of Soldiers down to about 250 (ADME) orders and was told that we had to track and find the Soldiers we had orders on.

Then came the task of keeping them on orders. This is where the real trouble started because I had to send their packets to Army G-1 at the Pentagon to be signed and approved. Sometimes it would take up to 4 Months to get their orders. Although doctors had requested extensions for soldiers up to 179 days and we submitted those requests, G-1 sometimes did not grant this much time, instead approving 90 day extensions. This caused more workload for us and put the soldiers at risk of falling off orders.

This caused great hardship for the Soldiers and their families not only monetarily, but because Medical care for soldiers and their families stops when soldiers are not on orders.

G-1 requirements for valid support for an extension often changed, sometimes without notice. For example, at first a form 46-2-R was acceptable for doctors to sign off, and this worked well. However, after about 6 months this form was no longer taken and now a letter from a Doctor was needed that included significantly more information such as the diagnosis, prognosis, and medical treatment plan. This then slowed down the process even more because the Soldier would have to get his or her Doctor to take time and write the letter.

In April of 2004 the Medical Retention Process was implemented. This was a giant step forward, reducing the process for getting orders down to an average of 7 days. There are still stipulations for getting on MRP orders they have to be on 12301 orders these are mobilization orders there are still some bugs in the system and we are working with Human Resources Command to fine tune the process

In addition to the problems with extending orders for soldiers and lost pay and benefits, there are other issues I want to bring to the Committee's attention. For example, during all this we encountered even more problems with the Active Duty, as they did not know how to deal with the Reserves and National Guard Soldiers. When I first arrived at Walter Reed I found a Soldier from California that was living in the hotel on ground. He had been living there for 3 months paying out of his own pocket. He had fallen off orders 2 months before when he went to the Active Duty. He was told that there was nothing they could do for him because he was National Guard. I did get him his back pay and that took 2 months because it took a month to get him back on orders. As far as I know he has never been reimbursed the total cost for 3 months at 65 dollars a night, which is around 5,000 dollars, and that's not even the worst of it.

After a few months they said everybody would have to move out of the barracks at Walter Reed. When I asked where they were going to move I was told that the Soldiers would have to get their own place to live because they were getting housing allowance after trying to explain that Guard and Reserves can not get the housing allowance for the Washington DC area. That they were Guard and Reserves they would get the rate for their home of records. Because Reserves and Guard can not be (PCS) Permanent Change of Station they can only be (TCS) Temporary Change of Station.

I even showed them the Regulation and went up the chain of command with this. Still I was told that they would have to move off post at their own cost. After 6 months of doing this I finally e-mailed the post commander within one hour I had an e-mail back from him. He said he was not aware of this and that he would do something about it. After two hours I was called in front of the Sergeant Major and was asked why I did what I did and then I was told that we did not do things this way.

I told the Sergeant Major that I was sent there to take care of Soldiers and that is what I was doing. Within a week the post commander had a meeting with all the key personal to get housing for the Soldier. I was marked as a trouble maker by some of Soldiers that were involved. After that we were treated differently. We are the last to get anything we

even had to get our first set of computers out of the trash along with our desks. We now have new computers paid for by GWOT.

We have paid and are continuing to pay for a lot of the supplies we use out of our own pockets. The Medical Hold Company only gets so much money to spend for the year. This put us at the bottom of the list for money. My staff and I do whatever it takes to make sure the Soldiers are taken care of. What makes this so bad is the Reserves and Guard are fighting next to the Active Duty and still we are treated like Second class citizen. We do not want to be treated special, just equal.

My staff and I even came up with a way to save the Army a considerable amount of monies and have better command and control over Soldiers. They spend about 60,000 dollars a month just for the Reserves and Guard to stay at the apartment complex. By moving the Soldiers to FT Meade the Army would save a considerable amount of monies.

We went to FT Meade and found that there was a building that was empty. We were told that we could have the building. I went to my chain of command with this they went forward with it but the Active Duty does not want this to happen. They say it is because they would lose command and control of us.

My chain of command has taken this to the top and it looks like this will happen. This should not have taken this long because there are a lot of avenues to this for the Soldiers they would be in a safer place to be there would be more for them to do. There is a movie theater a bowling alley and they have a post shuttle.

Mr. Chairman, my staff and I do whatever it takes to make sure the Soldiers are taken care of. The motto for the Medical Hold Company at Walter Reed is, "Soldiers First". My staff and I have spent approximately \$2000.00 of our own money in the past two years and are continuing to pay out of our own pockets for a lot of the supplies we use to

up hold that motto. The Medical Hold Company only gets so much money a year, and my office is at the bottom of the list for funding.

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